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October 16, 2007

The Honorable Phil Isenberg, Chair
Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
650 Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: First Draft Vision for Durable Management of a Sustainable Delta

Dear Chairman Isenberg:

On behalf of the thirty-one member counties of the Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) I am submitting the following preliminary comments on the first draft of the *Vision for Durable Management of a Sustainable Delta* (Vision) for consideration by the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force (Task Force). RCRC will submit more detailed comments after the release of the second draft document.

RCRC believes that recognition of existing law relating to areas of origin as a “core principle” is both necessary and appropriate if the Task Force is to be successful in its goal to develop a durable vision for sustainable management of California’s Delta. As stated in the Introduction (Page 5, lines 26-28) “This vision can be expected to evolve over several generations but its core principles should ensure to provide the foundation for durable management of a sustainable Delta.”

RCRC suggests that the following recognition of area of origin law be incorporated (where appropriate) into the Vision document as follows:

Nothing in the *Vision for Durable Management of a Sustainable Delta* shall be construed as a recommendation to diminish, impair, or otherwise affect any area of origin, watershed of origin, county of origin, or any other water rights protections provided under the law.

In the Executive Summary (Page 2, lines 19-21) the draft Vision document identifies two overriding priorities i.e. ecosystem protection and water provision. This would be an appropriate place to acknowledge existing areas of origin law and make a statement relating to redirected impacts. RCRC urges that this paragraph be amended to read:

Our vision accepts the judgment that the current situation of the Delta is not sustainable. We recognize among all the uses that must be accommodated in planning for the future of the Delta two overriding priorities – ecosystem protection and water provision, while providing to counties and watersheds of origin assurances that their priority to water resources will be protected and that programs or facilities

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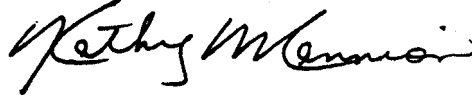
implemented or constructed in the Delta will not result in redirection of adverse impacts to the counties and watersheds of origin.

The Task Force is naturally focused on the Delta ecosystem. RCRC maintains that the needs of ecosystems upstream of the Delta are also of great importance. Additionally, the economic and social well being of the areas upstream of the Delta must not be ignored. In the Executive Summary (Page 2, lines 28-29) RCRC urges the following additional language be included:

By assigning a priority to water provision we do not envision any increases in available supplies for transport outside the Delta. To do so would compromise our priority for ecosystem protection and ignore the areas upstream of the Delta and the need to ensure that there is sufficient water available to supply future beneficial uses within the areas of origin.

Thank you for your consideration of these preliminary comments. If you have any questions I can be reached at (916) 447-4806 or kmannion@rcrcnet.org.

Sincerely,



Kathy Mannion
Director of Water and Power

cc: Members, Delta Blue Ribbon Task Force
Members, Delta Vision Committee